



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Concerned Consumers Calling Attorney General's Hotline Alarmed About Correspondence From ICR

Attorney General Darrell McGraw's Consumer Hotline has received calls from numerous West Virginians concerned about correspondence they received in the mail asking them to participate in a telephone survey. Enclosed with the letter are two one dollar bills. A few Charleston residents forwarded copies of the letters to McGraw's Consumer Protection Division for review.

The correspondence is from International Communications Research (ICR) located in Media, Pennsylvania. The letters inform recipients they will receive a telephone call from a research interviewer. The letter states all information will be kept confidential and if the consumer completes the survey the household will receive \$10.00 as a thank you gift. The letter further explains the \$2.00 was enclosed as an early token of appreciation in hopes the household will participate in the survey. The letter does not ask for personal information or instruct the recipients to call anyone.

After receiving several telephone calls, the Attorney General's Office opened an investigation on the matter. The Consumer Protection Division found the company began business operations in May, 1983 and the company registered as a Corporation in the State of Pennsylvania in February, 1995. According to the ICR website (www.icrsurvey.com), nationally known organizations such as ABC News, Kaiser Family Foundation, and the Harvard School of Public Health have used ICR to conduct market research and public opinion polling.

No complaints have previously been filed with the Attorney General's Office against ICR and it appears the surveys are being conducted to gauge newspaper readership in the Charleston area.

"I caution all who choose to participate in a survey not to disclose any personal information that can be used to steal someone's identity or to compromise a bank account. Do not disclose your exact date of birth, any portion of your social security number, or any information related to your bank account or your financial institutions," McGraw warned.

Those who may need the services of the Attorney General's Office are encouraged to call McGraw's Toll-Free Consumer Hotline at 1-800-368-8808 or visit his website at www.wvago.gov.

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